

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**14 DECEMBER 2009**

**1. CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Standards Committee agree to the change of title of this Policy from Official Conduct to Code of Conduct
- 1.2 THAT the Standards Committee note the Code of Conduct Policy document, attached as Appendix 1.

**2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to the Standards Committee to note the changes and the content of the Policy, which is the draft Code of Conduct Standing Order.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Public confidence in the integrity and standards of conduct by employees of the West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) must be high. The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees. Employees are expected to observe certain standards of behaviour and to bring to light any irregularity in behaviour or procedure.
- 3.2 The amendments to this Order reflect National Guidance on Code of Conduct which will meet the recommendations of the Internal Audit report on Governance.
- 3.3 This Order has been subject to the four week consultation process with the Trade Unions. Feedback was given to the Trade Unions on the outcomes of the consultation and they were also given a copy of the final draft of the Policy.

- 3.4 The Code of Conduct Standing Order has been written to replace the Official Conduct Standing Order 2/12. The Official Conduct Standing Order was due for review in line with the three year review of Standing Order.
- 3.5 The Order has been renamed to follow the National Code of Conduct guidance for Local Government terminology.
- 3.6 The Code of Conduct has been significantly amended and has covered all appropriate information from the old Standing Order as well as including guidance on the following:
- Reference to Core Values and behaviours
  - Expected Standards
  - Disclosure of Information
  - Political Neutrality
  - Outside Commitments, i.e. secondary employment and networking sites
  - Personal Interests
  - Procurement
  - Anti Fraud and Corruption
  - Use of financial resources
  - Social Events
  - Dress and Appearance
  - Working Relationships i.e. personal family relations and managerial responsibility
  - Canvassing Members of the Authority
  - Publications, broadcasts and lectures
  - Equality Issues
  - Criminal Charges
  - Confidentiality
- 3.7 The draft Code of Conduct has been attached for noting by the Standards Committee.

#### 4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

A Full Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken on the Code of Conduct Policy.

## 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The attached Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the West Midlands Fire Service. Members of the Authority already have a Code of Conduct in place following the provisions in the Local Government Act 2000 and the subsequent schedule to the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 (SI 2007 No. 1159) which has been adopted by the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Standards Committee terms of reference relate mainly to members apart from politically restricted posts.

The Employee Code of Conduct may have to be revised again if the Government brings out a national Code upon which it has consulted in the last couple of years or so.

## 6. **TRADE UNION CONSULTATION**

This Order has been consulted on through the four week consultation process as well as additional meetings with the recognised Trade Unions.

## 7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

National Guidance on Code of Conduct  
Local Government Act 2000  
Schedule to the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 (SI 2007 No. 115)

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CHIEF FIRE OFFICER